



Bellevue Planning Commission

June 11, 2025

PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

SUBJECT

Great Neighborhoods Program: Review of Full Drafts of Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plans

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POLICY ISSUES

Strong community connections directly raise the quality of life and strengthen neighborhoods. Council affirmed this with the City's initiation of the Great Neighborhoods program in 2018. On August 6, 2018, Council initiated Comprehensive Plan Amendments (CPAs) for updates of the neighborhood area plans for Northeast Bellevue and Northwest Bellevue, to be followed by the Crossroads and Newport neighborhood areas. Council ultimately adopted the Northeast Bellevue and Northwest Bellevue plans on December 21, 2021. The Great Neighborhoods program was paused during the large-scale 2024 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update, which was adopted by Council on October 22, 2024. Council resumed the program by initiating 2024-2025 CPAs for the Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plans on September 17, 2024.

Following an initial briefing to the Planning Commission on the Great Neighborhoods program on October 9, 2024, and an update on the 2024-2025 CPAs for the Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plans on April 9, 2025, staff will request direction from the Planning Commission at tonight's meeting to schedule a Public Hearing for each of the CPAs on Wednesday, July 9. This meeting is focused on reviewing the full drafts of the Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plans, including both policies and narrative sections.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION

ACTION

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DIRECTION

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INFORMATION ONLY

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At this meeting, the Planning Commission will discuss staff recommended policies and provide direction to schedule separate public hearings for the Crossroads and Newport neighborhood area plans on July 9.

BACKGROUND

Bellevue is a community of diverse and vibrant neighborhoods. Bellevue has 16 neighborhood areas that cover the full extent of the city. Each neighborhood area contains either a few or many smaller neighborhoods within it. Strong community connections directly raise the quality of life and strengthen neighborhoods. Council affirmed this with the initiation of the Great Neighborhoods program in 2018. See **Attachment A** for a map depicting the neighborhood area boundaries.

The Great Neighborhoods program provides a strategic, community-driven process for developing neighborhood area plans. The objective of the program is to adopt plans for each neighborhood area that are relevant to their community's distinctive identity, adaptability, social connectivity, and core needs with a high level of community ownership of the plan.

Council resumed the Great Neighborhoods program with Crossroads and Newport on September 17, 2024. The adoption of a neighborhood area plan follows the annual CPA process, set forth in the Land Use Code. The updates of the Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plans were initiated as part of the 2025 CPA process.

Community Engagement

The work program is organized to allow participants to share information about what is unique and distinctive in their neighborhood area, identify priorities, and consider strategic options in a logical and transparent manner. The neighborhood area planning process takes place in four phases, following project initiation and relationship building, as depicted graphically in **Attachment B**.

A detailed community engagement plan, with distinct phases following the overall schedule, is included as **Attachment C**. The goal of the community engagement plan is to manage equitable, informed community dialogue about the community's vision at the neighborhood level. The neighborhood area planning process is rooted in extensive community engagement and seeks to equitably engage local communities to define specific neighborhood values and policies. Particular attention is given to historically underserved communities and identifying any missing voices and perspectives to have representative engagement.

This meeting is also a continuation of the April 9 study session focused on an update on the 2024-2025 CPAs for the Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plans. Background information regarding community engagement in Phase 1 (Discover), which took place between October and December of 2024, was covered in the [April 9 Planning Commission memo](#) and has been omitted for brevity. At the April 9 meeting, the Planning Commission provided feedback on past community engagement and asked how participation compared to other initiatives. When compared to other recent long-range planning efforts – such as the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update and neighborhood area planning for Northeast Bellevue and Northwest

Bellevue – and accounting for population size, engagement efforts during the neighborhood area planning process to-date have generally been broad and robust in terms of participation for both Crossroads and Newport. The City continuously strives for improvement and continues to evaluate our Great Neighborhoods engagement efforts and make intentional efforts to connect with a broader audience moving forward.

Unique elements contributing to a neighborhood’s identity and top values identified by the community during Phase 1 (Discover) informed the neighborhood vision statement drafted during the start of Phase 2 (Define). Phase 2 (Define) began in January 2025 and went through early April. Engagement during this phase focused on developing draft plan elements, including a vision statement and key policy moves. The primary purpose of this second phase is to draft the neighborhood vision, key policy moves, and urban design framework based on the initial feedback from the first phase. One area of focus during Phase 2 (Define) is urban design.

In February, community members reviewed drafts of the neighborhood visions and policies at two separate virtual project update events for Crossroads and Newport. Following these virtual events, City staff hosted a public space event series starting in early March and ending in early April. This event series included different engagement activities for the community to provide feedback on public space improvements they want to see in their neighborhood. Engagement activities included virtual project update events, pop-up events, public space workshops, neighborhood scans, and community partner events.

Phase 3 (Refine) began in April and went through June of 2025. Engagement during this phase provided a second opportunity for community review and feedback on completed drafts of neighborhood plan elements. The focus of engagement for this phase is to ensure that (prior) community feedback has been incorporated and addressing any missing elements.

During this phase, City staff hosted several engagement activities to solicit community feedback on the draft policies. Engagement activities included community office hours, online engagement opportunities, and an info session. The virtual and in-person office hours provided community members with an opportunity to provide feedback on the draft policies and ask questions. The hybrid info session was combined for Newport and Crossroads and provided a space for community members to get a high-level overview of full draft plans, and an explanation of how they will move through the legislative process.

City staff also consulted various City of Bellevue boards and commissions to take in their feedback on draft policies. Staff presented the draft policies to the Parks and Community Services Board on May 21 and the Arts Commission on June 4. The Parks and Community Services Board was appreciative of the community engagement conducted to inform the draft policies and generally supportive of the draft policies for Crossroads and Newport. The Board provided specific feedback on draft policy S-CX-29 to broaden its intent beyond physical visibility. Regarding Newport draft policies, the Board provided feedback to replace the term “riparian” with an easier to understand alternative and to include Newcastle Beach Park in draft policy S-NP-30, and to add “history” to draft policy S-NP-29 as a subject to provide information signage on.

A full summary of community inputs gathered during Phase 2 (Define) and Phase 3 (Refine), informing the full draft neighborhood area plans for Crossroads and Newport, is provided in **Attachment D**. The attached engagement report is combined for both neighborhood areas and provides a detailed overview of past community engagement activities, who the City engaged with during each phase, and the City's efforts to equitably engage the community.

Neighborhood Area Plans

The Comprehensive Plan is a long-range planning document, focusing on broad policies meant to guide planning efforts for the next twenty years. The plan is organized into two volumes. Volume 1 provides general background information on Bellevue, outlines the community's vision for the future, and covers citywide goals for elements such as housing, transportation, human services and parks. Volume 2 contains goals and policies for neighborhood area plans.

A neighborhood area plan articulates a vision consistent with the citywide vision, sets priorities, and identifies future actions to realize the community's vision at the neighborhood level. Neighborhood area plans are adopted to guide future actions by the City and others working in the neighborhood areas. They work together and inform other City plans and initiatives, such as functional or implementation plans like the Parks & Open Space System Plan and Vision Zero.

Neighborhood area plans define broad priorities and emphasize the priorities of the community through a series of narratives and associated policies. These policies are supported by narrative, shaping the overall vision for the community, defining the area's important themes, and discussing the opportunities and challenges targeted by the policies. The draft plans therefore include the following sections:

1. A *vision statement* that articulates the desired future state of the neighborhood area.
2. A narrative that describes the background and *community context* for the neighborhood area plan, including its history and a demographic profile. Challenges and opportunities listed in this section were identified by community members through the neighborhood area planning process.
3. A *neighborhood policy summary* for each of the plan elements.
4. *Concept maps* to illustrate the urban design framework for enhancing neighborhood gathering spaces and neighborhood connectivity. The maps are supported by the neighborhood area plan policies.
5. A *goal and policies* for each of the plan elements that, when implemented, will help achieve the neighborhood area's vision.

The Crossroads and Newport plans center around strengthening a neighborhood area's unique identity and community gathering places as Bellevue prepares and plans for its well-managed future growth. Both plans are organized into five elements:

- **Neighborhood Identity:** A neighborhood's identity is reflected in the unique aspects of both its built and natural environment.

- **Neighborhood Centers and Mixed Use Center (Crossroads only):** Bellevue's neighborhood-serving commercial and mixed-use areas support the health and vitality of residential areas, and its five major commercial centers and centers for substantial future residential growth served by high-capacity transit are central to Bellevue's land use strategy.
- **Community Gathering Spaces:** Community gathering spaces are indoor and outdoor public spaces that foster a sense of belonging and serve as the heart of the neighborhood.
- **Mobility and Access:** Focuses on convenient connections between active transportation modes, such as walking and bicycling, and improved access to transit.
- **Environment:** Centers around enhancing a neighborhood area's built and natural environment to increase resiliency and sustainability.

As part of the neighborhood area planning process, property owners had the opportunity to initiate proposed amendments to the Future Land Use Map for privately-owned sites that would meet established criteria and public property. Since no applications were submitted during the planning process, no Land Use element is included in the plans.

Policy Overview

Tonight's study session focuses on reviewing the full drafts of the Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plans, including both policies and narrative sections. The full draft plans for Crossroads and Newport are included as **Attachment E** and **Attachment G**, respectively.

Tables listing all proposed plan policies for Crossroads and Newport are included separately, see **Attachment F** for Crossroads and **Attachment H** for Newport, and provide an overview of what informed each policy. With the most recent major updates to the old subarea plans for Crossroads and Newport Hills occurring in 1988 and 1994, respectively, the narrative and policies of these subarea plans have been reviewed and have informed the new policies where remaining relevancy exists. The attached tables also highlight where initial draft policy moves, which were previously shared for community review and feedback, informed the proposed policies. As Crossroads is one of Bellevue's candidate Countywide Centers, relevant Countywide Planning Policies from King County are identified in the policy table as well.

An overview of key priorities for each plan element is provided below.

Crossroads Neighborhood Area Plan

- **Neighborhood Identity:** Provide convenient access and improved navigation to community gathering spaces and other public spaces that represent the diverse Crossroads community.

- **Neighborhood Centers and Mixed Use Center:** Support the development of walkable and vibrant mixed-use districts recognizing their multiple roles in serving the community and Crossroad's role as a Countywide Center.
- **Community Gathering Spaces:** Create welcoming indoor and outdoor community gathering spaces throughout Crossroads in collaboration with key partners.
- **Mobility and Access:** Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections, also to expand transit access, and improve navigation through wayfinding.
- **Environment:** Adapt and create public spaces to improve environmental sustainability and increase the community's resilience to climate impacts.

Newport Neighborhood Area Plan

- **Neighborhood Identity:** Reflect the community's diversity, history and natural beauty through Newport's public spaces.
- **Neighborhood Center:** Support the unique identity of Newport's Neighborhood Center by better integrating it with the surrounding residential neighborhoods and retaining existing small businesses as it evolves.
- **Community Gathering Spaces:** Create new indoor community gathering spaces in collaboration with community partners, especially the Bellevue School District.
- **Mobility and Access:** Integrate and connect the different trail systems serving Newport providing easier access to its natural areas and other key destinations.
- **Environment:** Preserve and enhance Newport's natural areas and streams.

Existing Subarea Plans

In addition to the introduction of the Crossroads and Newport neighborhood area plans, these CPAs include the repeal of the previous Crossroads and Newport Hills subarea plans. The existing subarea plans follow the old subarea boundaries. Both the Crossroads and Newport neighborhood areas cover more than one old subarea, as can be seen in **Attachment I**. The Crossroads neighborhood area covers most of the old Crossroads subarea, part of the Wilburton/NE 8th Street subarea, and a small portion of the BelRed subarea. The Newport neighborhood area covers almost the full extent of the old Newport Hills subarea and that portion of the Factoria subarea located west of I-405.

The Comprehensive Plan provides guidance on how to address previous boundaries and policies through the neighborhood area planning process:

Policy NH-18. Periodically update neighborhood area plans consistent with the planning boundaries shown in Map N-1. For any given site, the 2014 subarea plan policies remain in effect until and unless they have been superseded by new planning area boundaries and policies.

To ensure subarea plan policies remain in effect where they won't be superseded by the Crossroads and Newport neighborhood area plans, several conformance changes are proposed to existing subarea plans to ensure consistency across Volume 2 of Comprehensive Plan. A comprehensive update of each of the subarea plans will happen periodically through the neighborhood area planning process including extensive engagement with the local community.

1. Modify the boundaries of the BelRed, Wilburton/NE 8th Street and Factoria subarea plans to align with the boundaries of the new neighborhood area plans for Crossroads and Newport.
2. Repeal the Crossroads and Newport Hills subarea plans.
3. Readopt the Crossroads subarea plan for that portion of the subarea located within the Lake Hills neighborhood area. Subarea plan policies that only apply to geographies covered by the new Crossroads neighborhood area plan are removed to ensure conformance, as outlined in **Attachment J**. A comprehensive update will take place in 2026-2027 as part of the Lake Hills neighborhood area planning process.

Planning Commission Review and Next Steps

The adoption of a neighborhood area plan follows the annual CPA process, set forth in the Land Use Code (LUC). Proposals to amend the Comprehensive Plan, including Volume 2 (Neighborhood Area Plans), are Process IV actions conducted pursuant to LUC 20.35.400 through 20.35.450. This means that the Planning Commission will review the updates against the Final Review Criteria and make a recommendation to City Council. The final Review criteria, set forth at LUC 20.30I, are,

1. Consistent with the Comprehensive Plan
2. Addresses the interests and needs of the entire city
3. Significantly changed conditions since the last time that portion of the text or map was considered
4. For site-specific amendments, the property is suitable for development (not relevant for these neighborhood area plans)
5. Demonstrates public benefit.

In a Process IV process, the Planning Commission holds Final Review public hearings and makes a recommendation to City Council. The City Council will review the Commission's recommendation and take action on it, together with any other proposed Annual Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

At tonight's meeting, staff will request direction from the Planning Commission to set the public hearing for each of the Crossroads and Newport Neighborhood Area Plan CPAs. Staff will return to the Planning Commission on Wednesday, July 9 (anticipated):

- Public Hearing and Recommendation for the Crossroads Neighborhood Area Plan CPA
- Public Hearing and Recommendation for the Newport Neighborhood Area Plan CPA

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Neighborhood Area Boundaries (Map NH-1)
- B. Project Timeline
- C. Community Engagement Plan Summary
- D. Engagement Report Phase 2 (Define) and Phase 3 (Refine)
- E. Crossroads Neighborhood Area Plan Full Draft
- F. Crossroads Proposed Policies Table
- G. Newport Neighborhood Area Plan Full Draft
- H. Newport Proposed Policies Table
- I. Neighborhood Area and Subarea Boundaries
- J. Crossroads Subarea Plan: Proposed Conformance Changes